

# Town Meeting

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BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

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## How Will the British Elections Affect the United States?

Moderator, **GEORGE V. DENNY, Jr.**

*Speakers*

**HAROLD E. STASSEN**

**ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.**

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### COMING

—March 7, 1950—

**What Should American Business Do About  
Point Four?**

—March 14, 1950—

**How Can Organized Religion Advance  
American Democracy?**

Published by **THE TOWN HALL, Inc.**, New York 18, N. Y.

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 44  \$4.50 A YEAR: 10c A COPY



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The account of the meeting reported in this Bulletin was transcribed from recordings made of the actual broadcast and represents the exact content of the meeting as nearly as such mechanism permits. The publishers and printer are not responsible for the statements of the speakers or the points of view presented.



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## THE BROADCAST OF MARCH 7:

### "What Should American Business Do About Point Four?"



## THE BROADCAST OF MARCH 14:

### "How Can Organized Religion Advance American Democracy?"



The Broadcast of February 28, 1950, over the American Broadcasting Company Network from 9:00 to 9:30 p.m., EST, originated in Town Hall, New York City.



Town Meeting is published by The Town Hall, Inc., Town Meeting Publication Office: 400 S. Front St., Columbus 15, Ohio. Send subscriptions and single copy orders to Town Hall, New York 18, N. Y. Subscription price, \$4.50 a year. 10c a copy. Entered as second-class matter, May 9, 1942, at the Post Office at Columbus, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

# Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



FEBRUARY 28, 1950

VOL. 15, No. 44

## How Will the British Elections Affect the United States?

### Announcer:

This is the 600th broadcast of America's Town Meeting, the Nation's favorite radio forum. On May 30 of this year, we'll celebrate our Fifteenth Anniversary. It is on occasions such as these that we like to take a moment to express our appreciation to you, our listeners, for your continued interest in Town Meeting as expressed by your many letters from week to week. We are always glad to have your suggestions and comments.

Our thanks also go to the managers of the 271 ABC network stations in the United States, Canada, Hawaii, and Alaska, and to the Voice of America which beams Town Meeting around the world.

We are also grateful to the businessmen who sponsor Town Meeting on their local ABC stations. Although we are not sponsored on the station to which you are listening, we will welcome the support of business leaders who may wish to increase their service to the people of their community. Your local ABC station manager can tell you more about Town Meeting sponsorship.

Now to preside over our discussion, here is your moderator, the President of Town Hall and founder of America's Town Meeting, George V. Denny, Jr. Mr. Denny. (*Applause*)

### Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. Last Thursday, 28,728,453 British people—the largest vote in British history—went to the polls and returned the Socialist government to power by a narrow majority of seven seats.



The American people watched this election with eager interest for two important reasons: first, because of our close ties with the British people and our stake in that nation's welfare, and, second, because of what these elections might mean to us here in the United States.

With the world-wide struggle for power in full swing, the elections in every free nation become a matter of concern to us. So tonight, for our 600th Town Meeting broadcast, we consider the question, "How Will the British Elections Affect the United States of America?" We have invited a leading Republican, the Honorable Harold E. Stassen, now president of the University of Pennsylvania, and an outstanding Democrat, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., of Harvard University to lead our discussion.

We are to hear first from the former Governor of Minnesota, one of the leading candidates for the Republican nomination for President of the United States in the last election, the Honorable Harold E. Stassen. Governor Stassen. (*Applause*)

### **Mr. Stassen:**

Mr. Denny, Mr. Schlesinger, my fellow citizens. I think the first comment that should be made about this spectacular recent British election and the great outpouring of the people of Britain to take part in that election is that it reaffirms that "there'll always be an England." (*Applause*)

In opening the discussion, I think we should first have the results clearly in mind. In the past five years since the war, the British Labor party has had 180 more seats in Parliament than has Winston Churchill's Conservative party, but as a result of last week's election, its lead is cut down from 180 seats to 19 seats.

In popular vote, the Labor total was 13,300,000 compared to 12,400,000 for the Conservatives and 2,600,000 for the Liberals. The Labor party lost 1.7 per cent of its popular support; the Conservative party gained 3.5 per cent in popular support; and the Labor party polled just 46 per cent of the total vote cast. Eighty-five per cent of the eligible people voted, which was one of the highest percentages in British history.

So much for agreed facts. Now as to the interpretation of these results, there will, of course, be immediate wide disagreement. I express to you now my view of their interpretation.

When a party is in power, it always has some advantage in elections. This advantage comes from its administrative control of the governmental machinery, from the tendency of the great number of public employees to support the incumbent adminis-

tration, and from the greater access to the radio and the newspapers by all of the public officials of the administration.

With that in mind, I believe that the two most significant positions of the incumbent government in England in this election were these:

1. They proposed more socialism; that is, more taking over by government of industries and activities in the country.
2. They did not approve of a new major conference with the leaders of Russia.

Now I interpret the results to mean that there is growing sentiment in England against further socialism and in favor of renewed conferences with the leaders of Russia seeking a route toward peace. Thus, I believe that it does have some very significant lessons for us in America.

Our incumbent national administration has taken the same position on these two major issues as has the British Labor government. President Truman's compulsory health plan and President Truman's Brannan Agricultural Plan are direct copies from the British Labor Socialist program.

The British now have programs in effect just like those proposed by President Truman, except they're a little more extreme. The people of Britain, after experiencing the results, are turning against their administration. In fact, the Australian and New Zealand elections point to the same conclusion.

Now it could be said that the developments in these recent years throughout the world indicate that the people who have learned to know socialism best are turning against it, wherever they still have the power to show their views by free votes. They can't turn against socialism in Czechoslovakia, or Hungary, or Rumania, or Bulgaria. It's too late.

Now the President of the United States and the Secretary of State have also been insisting that it would not be worth while to extend an invitation for a major mid-century conference with the leaders of Russia. As you know, I have urged that such an invitation should be extended, that American participation in the conference should be bipartisan in nature including, specifically, Senator Vandenburg, Senator Taft, Bernard Baruch, and General Dwight D. Eisenhower. (*Applause*)

The President's answer to these proposals has been very similar to Mr. Attlee's answers in England. I believe the British election confirms what our own mail has indicated. There's a very strong sentiment among the people of our country that such an invitation should be extended.

Now let me make it clear that there must be no appeasement,



there must be no sham agreements, there must be no high hopes of accomplishment in such conferences. But I believe strongly—and I think the people agree—that a nation with the moral foundation of our country, or of England, must repeatedly seek the means of working out a peaceful solution of world problems. I believe the peoples of both countries agree that it is never a sign of weakness to seek a just and honorable and lasting peace.

What then does this British election mean for the future? I think it means that in these next few months the unfortunate effects of the socialist policies of the Labor government and the financial policies of Sir Stafford Cripps will become more and more apparent, and within less than a year another British election will be held.

Likewise, in less than a year, the Congressional and Senatorial elections will be held in the United States, and, if our Republican party presents constructive and progressive and dynamic proposals as alternatives to the undesirable features of President Truman's program, then, I think, you'll find a sharp gain in Republican Congressional seats next November. (*Applause*)

### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Governor Stassen. Well, Professor Schlesinger, Governor Stassen sees some very clear implications in the British elections for this country. How does it look to you? We are happy to welcome Mr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., associate professor of History at Harvard University and a member of the National Board of Americans for Democratic Action. Professor Schlesinger. (*Applause*)

### **Professor Schlesinger:**

Mr. Denny, Governor Stassen, friends. I think that Governor Stassen and I can agree in regretting that the British elections were not decisive enough to produce a government of whatever party strong enough to make important international decisions.

I would agree, too, that Mr. Churchill's call for direct negotiations with Russia had some effect on the electorate. But I think that, in the main, the election was fought on domestic issues, and the first conclusion I would draw is that the election represents a stunning victory for the idea of the welfare state. (*Applause*)

The Conservative party based its entire campaign upon repeated promises that under a Conservative government the state would continue to underwrite basic economic and welfare standards for the entire population. As Mr. Churchill himself put it, "The scheme of society for which we stand is the establishment and

maintenance of a basic standard of life and labor below which a man or woman, however old or weak, shall not be allowed to fall."

Now this statement of Mr. Churchill seems to me a pretty fair definition of the welfare state and of the essential goals of President Truman's Fair Deal program. I fail to see, therefore, how an American Conservative like Governor Stassen can extract much comfort from the Tory gains in Britain, for, if these gains prove anything, they prove that the present policy of the Republican party in this country is bankrupt. They prove that no Conservative party can hope for success on a program of resisting the welfare state. (Applause)

The Tory success in Britain was the success of "Me-Too-ism." The Tories gained because they accepted the welfare state, not because they opposed it.

Let us look at some specific issues. Governor Stassen, for example, is opposed to the nationalization of industry, yet the Tory party was pledged to accept nearly all the nationalization achieved under the Labor government.

Governor Stassen is opposed to socialized medicine, yet the Tory platform said, "We pledge ourselves to maintain and improve the national health service." Mr. Churchill even tried to claim credit for having started socialized medicine in the coalition government.

And it's the same with full employment. The Tory platform said, "We regard the maintenance of full employment as the first aim of a Conservative government."

If the Republicans call the Fair Deal socialism, what do they call the program of the British Tories? Indeed, as that independent British magazine, *The Economist*, put it, "If the Conservative leaders are really set on outbidding their opponents for the leadership of the welfare state, they have certainly made a thorough job of it." The foes of the welfare state in America, therefore, are hardly the ones to be encouraged by their success.

A second lesson from the British elections is a vivid reminder of the fundamental difference between democratic socialism, as in Britain, and totalitarian communism, as in Russia and Eastern Europe. Governor Stassen has said that socialism and communism are two peas from the same pod. Others have called socialism a halfway house to communism.

It's perfectly evident from the British elections that, on the contrary, democratic socialism is a mighty bulwark against communism. Every Communist and fellow-traveling member of Parliament was defeated last week. We have more fellow travelers in our own Congress!



Now compare the Communist problem in Britain's welfare state with the really large-size Communist problem in the so-called free economies of the Continent, like France and Italy where social welfare is sacrificed to private enterprise and capitalism.

It is clear that where the welfare state exists, as in Britain and Scandinavia, there is no internal threat of communism, because communism flourishes in the soil of insecurity and want. But where the central government refuses to accept full responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, as in France and Italy, there you have strong and dangerous Communist parties.

In short, where the welfare state is strong, communism is negligible, but where the welfare state is weak, communism is strong.

The British election makes nonsense of one other attempt to identify democratic socialism with totalitarian communism. The essence of totalitarianism is the stamping out of political opposition; yet if the British election proves anything, it proves that political freedom is quite as real and lusty under democratic socialism as under democratic capitalism.

The main impact of the election on the United States, I believe, will be to strengthen the idea of the welfare state, and, particularly, to strengthen those few lonely voices in the Republican party calling upon that party to embrace the welfare state.

The British election, thus, represents one more step in the acceptance by free peoples of the welfare state as the normal and necessary responsibility of government. (*Applause*)

### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Professor Schlesinger. Now, Harold Stassen, before we take the questions from the audience, have you a question you would like to put to Mr. Schlesinger?

**Mr. Stassen:** Well, I will ask him one brief question, Mr. Denny, but first I'd like to comment. I've heard many interpretations of the results, but this is the first time I've heard it interpreted as a "stunning victory" for the socialist state. (*Laughter*) I think it was a stunning victory in which the victors were stunned. (*Laughter*) In fact, the *London Times*, the Air Mail Edition, said that any last-ditch attempt to interpret the meager Labor new majority as a mandate to go on as before would be foolish and futile, and I'd like to ask if, in interpreting that, Mr. Schlesinger doesn't agree that there will be another election, perhaps within less than a year, in England under these circumstances?

**Mr. Schlesinger:** I do agree. I think that the margin of the



majority is so narrow that the Government will have to go to the country again to see what the new popular mandate is.

**Mr. Denny:** Thank you. Will you now ask the Governor a question before we take these questions for you both?

**Mr. Schlesinger:** Yes, I would ask the Governor a question. I do believe that it's essential for us to have in our own minds the distinction between the welfare state and socialism. I would ask the Governor, who said in his speech that the compulsory health program and the Brannan Plan are both copies from the British Labor program—in fact they are also copies of what the Tories in England are in favor of—if there is so little difference between the Fair Deal Program and the program on which the Tories achieved their gains in this last election, what does he conclude from that as to the future of the welfare state?

**Mr. Denny:** Governor Stassen?

**Governor Stassen:** Well, that's a very common misinterpretation of the Conservative position. It's not true that they said, "Me, too." I quote specifically from their platform, *Right Road for Britain*: "We shall bring nationalization to a full stop here and now. Therefore, we shall save all those industries such as cement, sugar, meat distribution, chemicals, water, and insurance which are now under threat by the Socialists. We shall repeal the Iron and Steel Act, before it can come into force. The nationalization of tramways will be halted. Wherever possible, those already nationalized will be offered to their former owners, whether private or municipal. We shall also be prepared to sell back to free enterprise those sections of the road haulage industry which have been nationalized."

In other words, clearly the Conservative position was against socialism.

Now the effort of the Socialists is constantly to interpret an opposition to socialism as being a position against social insurance, which is an entirely different thing.

The whole development of unemployment compensation, of old-age assistance, has been advanced by both parties in England, as it has been advanced by both parties in the United States.

What we are against—what the Conservative in England is against—is taking over, in a great centralized government, the actual operation, ownership, management of the great industries of a country, because that's the way to lower the standard and defeat the welfare of the people. (*Applause*)

**Mr. Denny:** Thank you. Thank you, Governor Stassen. Now, while we get ready for our question period, here's a message for our Town Hall listeners.

**Announcer:** You are listening to the 600th broadcast of America's Town Meeting of the Air, originating from world-famous Town Hall just off Times Square in New York. Harold E. Stassen and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., are discussing the question, "How Will the British Elections Affect the United States?" The complete text of tonight's program is printed in our weekly publication, the TOWN MEETING BULLETIN. For your copy of this broadcast and the next ten issues, just mail \$1 to Town Hall, New York 18, New York.

If other obligations prevent you from listening to Town Meeting every Tuesday, a subscription to the BULLETIN will bring these programs to you in printed form. The yearly subscription rate is \$4.50.

People who are active in local discussion groups and civic organizations find the TOWN MEETING BULLETIN a valuable reference publication. Why not begin your subscription with this week's issue?

Now, our Town Meeting audience is ready with questions, so for our question period, we return you to Mr. Denny.

# QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

*Mr. Denny:* We will start with the lady on the aisle here, please.

*Lady:* Governor Stassen. How sincere can you consider Churchill's plea for further talks with Russia in view of his Fulton, Missouri, speech?

*Governor Stassen:* I think Mr. Churchill's plea for further talks with the leaders of Russia is very sincere. The Fulton, Missouri, speech pointed out that we would seek by free information to all peoples, with the United States and the British Empire standing together, to advance the cause of peace. I believe that Mr. Churchill's record through a whole lifetime shows that he sincerely wishes to advance peace and progress for mankind.

*(Applause)*

*Man:* Mr. Schlesinger. If socialism in England is so successful, as you say, why in the devil do they always come to us for help?

*(Applause)*

*Mr. Schlesinger:* The problem of why England has to come to us for help is absolutely unconnected with the question of socialism. Any kind of government in control of England after the ravages of the war and after the war losses, and in view of the general declining economic position of the British Empire, would be dependent upon American aid. That is absolutely irrespective of whether it would be a Tory government or a Socialist government. *(Applause)*

*Governor Stassen:* Now, may I comment on that Mr. Denny? It is, of course, correct that the war damage is the main reason that the British need help from the United States, but it isn't the whole reason. The production of their socialized industries has gone down; in other words, they're getting less coal out of the ground now than they did before. Of course, we can't talk much about that right now *(laughter)*, but we have a good coal production record. Their production has gone down under the nationalization of their industries, and that's one part of their problem—along with the war damage.

*Man:* I'd like to ask Professor Schlesinger what does democratic socialism mean? How does it differ from democratic capitalism?

*Mr. Schlesinger:* Democratic socialism means a form of society in which political freedom—the rights of political opposition—will be maintained. The difference between democratic socialism and democratic capitalism is to my mind getting less and less, because democratic capitalism, in order to maintain its democracy, has to preserve the power of the people and of the state over the concentrations of private business power. In that way, I think that



more and more there will be less and less difference between genuine democratic socialism and a genuine democratic capitalism.  
(Applause)

Mr. Denny: Thank you.

Lady: Governor Stassen. Why is it necessary to parallel the British Conservatives with the United States Republicans?

Governor Stassen: I couldn't hear.

Mr. Denny: Why is it necessary to what?

Lady: —to parallel the British Conservatives with the United States Republicans?

## THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**HAROLD EDWARD STASSEN**—A former Governor of Minnesota, the Honorable Harold E. Stassen is now president of the University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Stassen was born near South St. Paul in 1907. In 1929, he received both a liberal arts degree and a law degree from the University of Minnesota. He opened a law office in South St. Paul, and a year later became county attorney, a position he held for eight years. In 1938, he became the youngest Governor ever elected in Minnesota. He was reëlected twice, but, in 1943, resigned to enter the U. S. Navy. He was an aide to Admiral Halsey and was later appointed assistant chief of staff with the rank of lieutenant commander. He was cited for outstanding duty in the Second Battle of Philippine Sea, October, 1944.

Mr. Stassen was one of the eight official U. S. delegates to the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations in 1945. In November, 1945, he was released for inactive duty. He has been an outstanding member of the Republican party, and was a candidate for the presidential nomination in 1948.

Mr. Stassen is president of the International Council of Religious Education. He is also the author of the book, *Where I Stand*, as well as articles in various publications.

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**ARTHUR MEIER SCHLESINGER, JR.**—Born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1917, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., received his A.B. summa cum laude from Harvard in 1938. He was a member of the Society of Fellows from 1939 to 1942. In 1942, he joined the Office of War Information, and, after a year, went to the Office of Strategic Services. He served in the U. S. Army in 1945.

Since 1946, Mr. Schlesinger has been associate professor of history at Harvard. For his book, *The Age of Jackson*, published in 1945, he received the Pulitzer Award and the New York Newspaper Guild Award for best book of the year. In 1946, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Academy of Arts and Letters grant.

Mr. Schlesinger is also the author of *Orestes A. Brownson: a Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Vital Center*, and many articles in such magazines as *Fortune*, *Life*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Nation*.

Mr. Denny: "to parallel the British Conservatives with the United States Republicans."

Governor Stassen: Why is it necessary to do so?

Lady: Well, it's been done this evening, I thought.

Governor Stassen: Well, there are certain basic parallels. Mr. Schlesinger just referred to the question of democratic socialism, and, of course, our position is that if you really go all the way into socialism, you can no longer have democracy. England has gone about 20 per cent in, and is now beginning to pull back from the rest of the road.

In all the countries in the world where they've gone all the way into a socialist economy, they have then lost their democracy and lost their freedom. My hope is that the sincere young Socialists in this country and in the world will begin to restudy and re-analyze their theories and the way they've worked out since the war. (Applause)

Mr. Denny: All right, Mr. Schlesinger.

Mr. Schlesinger: I would like to comment briefly on that. I don't myself happen to be a Socialist, but I think that this notion—the impression which Governor Stassen's comment made—that there is a kind of a continuous process by which democratic socialism transforms itself into totalitarian socialism is a notion which finds no warrant in history or experience.

Totalitarianism has arisen because the democratic government has had *not enough* power to do what must be done for the people. It has not arisen in any instance because the democratic government has been given power by power for the purpose of doing good for the people. (Applause)

Governor Stassen: May I ask on that, Mr. Schlesinger, what about the story in Czechoslovakia? They went into socialism after the war, and now they've wound up in a totalitarian situation.

Mr. Schlesinger: The reason why Czechoslovakia went totalitarian had nothing to do with the internal processes of Czechoslovakia. Governor Stassen is taking Mr. Wallace's view as to what happened in Czechoslovakia. It's quite clear that the reason that Czechoslovakia went Communist is because of the fact that the Red Army was on its borders and was threatening to march in.

Governor Stassen: Oh, no, no!

Mr. Schlesinger: It had nothing to do with the internal problem. (Applause)

Governor Stassen: The facts of the matter are that, by socializing the country, they gave the government enough power so the communists in the government could take it over and make it a totalitarian country. (Applause)

*Mr. Schlesinger:* I challenge that rendering of the facts of the matter, and I suggest that any of you who are interested look the matter up in the *New York Times*, where you will find out what really happened. (*Laughter and applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* All right. Well, we've had both views.

*Governor Stassen:* I'll concur in the authority of the *New York Times*.

*Mr. Denny:* All right. We've had both views now, let's go another question. Yes?

*Man:* Governor Stassen, please. Professor Schlesinger seems to confuse support of human welfare with support of a welfare state. I wonder if the Governor would care to comment.

*Governor Stassen:* I think that your question is well put, in that all parties in both countries want to advance the welfare of the people. The question is how is it done. The people of England are finding that their welfare is not improved, and they are suffering from a lower standard of living than are the peoples on the Continent who've turned away from socialism.

The whole basic question is why do we have the best standards of living in the world in America? It's because of our tradition of individual freedom — freedom economic, social, political, and religious. We say let's carefully advance the welfare of the people while holding fast to those individual freedoms. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you.

*Mr. Schlesinger:* The question of the relationship of government in welfare is a very interesting one, particularly the question of the relationship between political parties and welfare. Why actually, on the question of industrial production which has been raised, the United Kingdom has increased its production higher than, for example, Belgium or France, over 1938 figures under a Socialist government.

I would say in addition that the answer to what kind of parties are interested in the public welfare lies not in promises but in performance. The record of the Tory party in Britain, when it was last in power, and the record of the Republican party in this country, when it was last in power, have given answers which people still find, on the whole, persuasive as to which party is really concerned with the welfare of the people. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you, Professor Schlesinger and Governor Stassen, for your splendid contributions to our 600th Town Meeting broadcast. Now, in just a moment, I'll tell you about our subject and speakers for next week.

*Announcer:* Following next Tuesday's program, which Mr. Denny will tell you about in just a moment, Town Meeting will



begin its annual spring tour. We'll travel first to the Middle West. The program of March 14 will originate from Cincinnati, where our hosts will be the Hebrew Union College, which is celebrating its 75th Anniversary, and the Jewish Institute of Religion.

On March 21, Town Meeting will come to you from Bloomington, Illinois, under the auspices of Illinois Wesleyan University and our Bloomington sponsor, *The Daily Pantagraph*.



# Town Meeting Bulletin

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The following Tuesday, March 28, we'll be in Peoria for the Civic Forum at Bradley University.

Because it's our desire to make this truly America's Town Meeting, we originate at least half of our broadcasts each year in different sections of the country, and, because we strive to discuss subjects of primary concern to the American people, we welcome your suggestions for subjects and speakers. Let us know what topics you would like to hear on your Town Meeting of the Air. Now to tell you about next week's program, here is Mr. Denny.

*Mr. Denny:* One of the most controversial and widely discussed problems America faces with respect to the rest of the world is what is known as President Truman's Point Four Program. It's been referred to as a bold new program in which this country can extend financial and technical aid to help develop the underdeveloped areas of the world.

Actually, many American business firms have been pioneering in this field for a great many years in Latin America, in the Middle East, in the Far East, and there's general agreement on the objectives of increasing this program throughout the world. The controversy arises over how it should be done.

So next week, we'll join the Mexico Pilgrims and the Mexico Pilgrim Foundation, which was formed for the purpose of assisting schools and hospitals in Mexico, at a dinner-forum at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel where they are presenting a discussion of the subject, "What Should American Business Do About Point Four?"

Our speakers will be the Honorable John W. Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury, and the Honorable Spruille Braden, former Ambassador to Chile, Cuba, and Argentina. So plan to be with us next week and every week at the sound of the Crier's bell.